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NATIONS UNIES
HAUT COMMISSARIAT
POUR LES REFUGIES



UNITED NATIONS
HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES

P1 HN

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Secretary-General

Your fax no:

Our fax no: 41.22.739.8694

ATTENTION:

FROM: Sadako Ogata

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sadako Ogata'.

DATE: 24 October 1994

TIME: 18h.30

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING THIS COVER PAGE: 3 PAGES

IF YOU DO NOT RECEIVE ALL PAGES OR IF THEY ARE NOT CLEAR, PLEASE CALL US
IMMEDIATELY (OUR TELEPHONE NUMBERS ARE 41.22.739.8254/8101)

Message

I thank you for trying to contact me at a difficult time for you on Friday,
21 October.

The purpose of my call was to discuss with you the deteriorating security
situation in Rwandese refugee camps. This is especially worrying in Zaire
where, in my view, urgent measures have to be taken. In this respect, I am
attaching a note on security in Rwandese refugee camps outlining the problem
and what UNHCR intends to do to remedy the situation.

I thank you in advance for your attention and, as usual, I count on your
continuing support.

UNHCR Geneva

Security in Rwandese Refugee Camps

1. The security conditions in Zaire, Tanzania and Burundi have steadily deteriorated both inside and around refugee camps. In all these countries refugees have been killed, assaulted, harassed and intimidated. The local population and, to a lesser extent, relief workers, have also been affected by the general climate of insecurity. Some NGOs have left, others are considering leaving.

2. The direct results of the violence prevailing in refugee camps/areas have been:

- a) a reduced flow of spontaneous voluntary repatriation movement to Rwanda, candidates for return being intimidated or otherwise victimized;
- b) a diversion of sizeable amount of relief items to the benefit of "leaders" or other undeserving persons and to the detriment of needy genuine refugees, especially vulnerable groups such as women, children and the elderly;
- c) a disruption of the delivery of assistance because of threats levelled against relief workers.
- d) a resistance to orderly registration of refugees in order to streamline the distribution system;
- e) a persistent attempt by the leaders to control and take over the day-to-day running of the camps.

In principle, asylum states are responsible for maintaining law and order in refugee camps. However, these states are not adequately prepared and equipped to enforce law and order on their own. They need to be assisted with personnel, logistics and equipment.

At the initiative of UNHCR, Tanzania is strengthening its police contingents in and around the camps. More needs to be done. Security in the camps in Zaire remains, however, UNHCR's main preoccupation. The initiatives taken by the UN Secretariat and SRSK Khan are welcome. His recommendations are awaited. Meanwhile, Zaire has requested international assistance for the maintenance of law and order in the camps. A similar request was conveyed to UNHCR by Deputy Prime Minister Kamanda on 6 October 1994 during the UNHCR Executive Committee Meeting. A prompt initiative is, therefore, needed.

Within its mandate, UNHCR has a fundamental responsibility to bring security to refugees. In the particular circumstances prevailing in Zaire, the best measure to achieve this goal would be the introduction of a multinational police force which would come in support of the Zairean security forces. This multinational police force could be constituted along the following lines:

- a multinational contingent (size to be determined) composed of police/gendarmes from French-speaking African countries (and perhaps Canada);
- logistical support in transport and equipment from non-African countries;
- financial support from other countries.

- 2 -

UNHCR is prepared to undertake the necessary demarches to initiate the operation. The approach used will be that of a "security service package" along the lines which have been successfully adopted for other aspects of refugee support and assistance. Informal preliminary contacts indicate that such an approach would meet with favourable reactions in a number of countries.

The above plan has been shared with USG Peter Hansen and SRSG Shaharyar Khan who have reacted positively to it, as it would complement other initiatives already underway. In view of the urgency of the situation, it is essential that this initiative be formalized as soon as possible.

Geneva, 24 October 1994